Time Management For Students: A Psychological Explanation

In Time Management for Students: a Psychological Explanation of Why We Struggle by Dr. Jennifer Jill Harman quotes, “If only I had more time, I’d ace this assignment…” (1). By this, Harman is implying that it is what so many students say every time they think they did not have time for a specific assignment. The challenge I chose is Time Management. Some consequences that lead to poor time management are procrastination, distractions, poor planning, as well as work. Some of the solutions that can help students manage their time efficiently are time assessment, prioritizing, setting goals, and planning them.

One of the problems that college students have with time management is mostly procrastination. Students experience procrastination very often in college, “more than half (59%) of the responding students said that “procrastination” posed the biggest barrier to effective use of their time” (Strang 1). Students start to procrastinate when they think that they will have enough time to do stuff, and they forget about it and they leave it until the last minute. According to June Shepard and Michael Shaughnessy, in the article Procrastination, they state that “Such behavior results in putting off impending or priority tasks to a later time, sometimes to the last minute” (1). In other words, Shepard and Shaughnessy imply that student's behavior can lead to student's procrastination in college. Another reason that leads to procrastination is “laziness, low willpower, low ambition, low ability, lack of commitment, or being immature or manipulative. Most procrastinators would say that those labels are harmful and untrue” (Shepard & Shaughnessy 1). Students believe that leaving everything last minute will help them succeed in college and they would ace the assignments. The effects and consequences of procrastination can lead to failing a class and being dropped from it as well, it can be more stress and anxiety leading to health problems. June and Michael insist that “waiting until the last minute and working under self-imposed pressure can result in stress, anxiety, a sense of guilt, health problems, it can create unrelated crises, or result in harming social relationships with others for not reliably meeting responsibilities and commitments” (1). I agree with June and Michael because leaving everything last minute thinking that you have enough time can stress you out more because of the amount of work you have to do and get done. I can relate to this because in my ethnic studies class I had a response card for homework and I thought that I was going to be able to do it before class but I still needed to read the article and I got stressed because the article was long and I had to find a quote and write a question.

Another problem that leads to poor time management in college students is distractions. Distractions can play a big role in the lack of poor time management because many students can get distracted easily and by that, they don't finish their work and end up not understanding what and when it has to be done. According to the article, College Students Barriers to Effective Time Management by Tami Strang states that “43% admitted that ‘being influenced or distracted by friends and family’ caused them to use their time in a less-than-effective manner” (1). This shows that not only do students procrastinate in college but they also get distracted because they go with their friends and family, and they end up not doing their assignments. I agree that getting distracted is a big key to poor time management because it happened to me as well when I tried doing my project but I got distracted from what the other students were doing and I did not finish. In the article, The Impact of Time Management on the Students’

Academic Achievements by Shazia Nasrullah and Muhammad Saqib Khan state, “As a result, students will not be able to organize duties according to their priorities, so they get distracted easily, ending up procrastinating” (2). In other words, Nasrullah and Khan argue that students that are not organized and not prioritized are mostly likely to get distracted. This shows that not only do students get distracted by friends and family but also because they aren't organized. Some of the effects and consequences of students being distracted are that “they run the serious risk of forgoing all that they need to get done for school, their jobs, and other commitments” (Strang 1). Those consequences are caused by students listening to others, and not being organized that can lead to being done for school, their jobs, etc.

There can be many consequences that cause poor time management. Many of these consequences can affect a student in many ways. Some of the common consequences are procrastination, distractions, poor planning, as well as work can be a consequence to time management. According to Kerry Watts in the article The Effects of Poor Time Management states that some of the consequences of time management are, “struggling to be on time, being rushed around, lacking patience and feeling irritable, failing to set goals, finding it hard to make decisions, failing to perform, etc.” (1). In other words, Kerry is implying that these can also be consequences of poor time management not only procrastination, distractions, etc. It can be hard for students to get back on track if they are experiencing any of these in college. I can relate to this because one of the consequences that I experienced in college was distraction. I would get distracted very easily while I was doing homework. Receiving text messages, on social media, and talking to others about a different topic rather than doing homework were the reasons why I easily got distracted.

Poor planning is also another problem that students have with time management. Poor planning is also something that many college students don't take as something important because they think that they will remember everything they need to do and when it will be done. Tami Strang demonstrates that “Slightly more than a quarter (26%) told us that “neglecting to create a schedule for their time” caused them problems” (1). Tami’s point is that 26 percent of students do not write a planned out schedule to manage their time effectively. It shows that by not planning out their work and being organized that it can cause problems. I agree that not having a plan can cause problems because it can also cause more stress by not having everything scheduled. Poor planning is not just a waste of time, over-committing or over-scheduling their time “proves problematic for 41%, indicating that large groups of students recognize that they have many important responsibilities, yet they are not yet able to prioritize or make decisions about the best or most appropriate use of their day” (Strang 1). In other words, Strang argues that over-scheduling can be a part of poor planning because you are scheduling way too many things and some of them can be unnecessary.

Fortunately, there are solutions to help college students with time management which are time assessment, prioritizing, setting goals, and planning them. Time assessment is the key to succeeding in college because it is oneself that has control of our time. Jennifer Jill reveals that “it is not time management per se that leads to better outcomes, but rather we believe that we have control of our time” (1). Some ways to manage your time more efficiently are not overloading your schedule, being more organized, only writing down what needs to be done and not unnecessary things. These are a few step by step tips; “Step 1: Understanding where your time goes, and students can do that by setting up systems to track your daily progress and stay on track. Step 2: Set smart goals by prioritizing, by that students can setting “smarter goals, separate the urgent from the important work. Step 3: Make a schedule by building a morning

routine that gives you momentum, give up on multitasking and context switching. Step 4: Optimize your work environment by getting rid of clutter (both physical and digital), set up your tools for focus. Step 5: Protect your time (and your focus) from distraction by using the right time management tools, auto-mate non-negotiable focused time throughout the day" (McKay 1). These are some tips that I believe can be useful to students to be better manage their time. Jennifer Jill adds that "getting organized with lists of what all needs to be done, setting priorities for certain tasks, scheduling time for tasks to be accomplished, and then protecting this time to get things done…"(1). By this being said, students can use different tools to be able to manage their time, even more, better than before so that they won't be so stressed, they won't have an overload of other non-important stuff, for example, setting alarms, and having calendars. Planning out your time in college is a major help to students according to the article First-Year College Students Time Use by Jordan Thibodeaux, Aaron Deutsh, Anastasia Kitsantas, and Adam Winsler they all state that, "Results indicated that planning more time in academics was related to having a higher GPA for the first and second semesters" (18). By this, they are implying that not only does planning help students be organized but it can also raise their GPA. Some other solutions to better time management are avoiding distractions like saying no to others such as friends and sometimes family, also work because it can be that overload for students as well.

All in all, time management does have many consequences and cause many problems to college students which lead to procrastination, distractions, poor planning, as well as work but some solutions can help college students be successful in college which are time assessment, prioritizing, setting goals, and planning them. Students living in the future will be much easier and healthy by following these solutions. I think it will be much easier because they would be more organized, and won't have an overload of stuff that is not necessary at all. They will only consider when to say no to others, also set goals that they want to be done. I think it will be healthier because without the overload of other things that will stress them and cause anxiety or other health problems. Overall I think every college student can be successful if they just give themselves time to plan everything out it is just a matter of putting yourself to do it.